

Off-Campus Living | Personal Safety

In Your Apartment

- Always keep doors locked (exterior and interior).
- Don't unlock or prop doors open for extended periods of time for roommates or friends.
- Never leave keys for roommates or friends outside of apartment.
- Be sure to lock all doors and windows when you aren't going to be home.
- Never let someone you don't know/are not expecting into your apartment.
- When it's dark, look around and have your keys ready before you get to your door—avoid being on your cell phone so you can stay alert.
- Make sure your landlord provides lighting (such as a motion light) in the entrance to your apartment/stairway/driveway.
- If you know it will be dark when you return to your apartment, leave a light on or set a timer for a lamp to be lit.
- Get to know the people in your building/next door.
- If you plan to leave for a long period of time, pull all window shades and place your valuables in a secure location.
- Pull down window shades at night.
- Notify the police if any unfamiliar or suspicious person is hanging around your building.

Street Smarts: Adapted from the National Crime Prevention Council

<http://www.ncpc.org/resources/files/pdf/violent-crime/streetwise.pdf>

Whether you're on campus or off, it's important to know where you are and who is around you at all times. Keep the following in mind to help you stay safe, especially late at night.

Basic Smarts

- Stay alert and tuned into your surroundings wherever you are—at school or the mall, on the street, waiting for a bus or subway, or driving.
- Send the message that you're calm, confident, and know where you're going.
- Don't accept rides or gifts from someone you don't know well and trust—that includes people you've met on the Internet.
- Always tell someone where you're going and when you expect to come back.
- Don't go anywhere with someone you've just met.
- Trust your instincts. If something or someone makes you uneasy, avoid the person or situation and leave as soon as possible.
- Know the neighborhoods where you live, go to school, and work. Keep in mind locations of fire and police stations and public telephones. Remember which stores and restaurants stay open late.

Walking (Day or Night)

- Try to walk places with your friends rather than alone.

- Stick to well-lighted, well-traveled streets. Avoid shortcuts through wooded areas, parking lots, or alleys.
- Take the safest route to and from schools, stores, or your friends' houses.
- Know where to go for help if you need it.
- Don't display your cash or any other inviting targets like pagers, cell phones, hand-held electronic games, or expensive jewelry and clothing.
- Carry your backpack or purse close to your body and keep it closed. Just carrying a wallet? Put it inside your coat or front pants pocket, not in your back pocket or in your backpack.
- Have your car or house key in your hand before you reach the door.
- If you think someone is following you, switch directions or cross the street. If they're still there, move quickly toward an open store or restaurant or a lighted house. Don't be afraid to yell for help.
- Have to work late? Make sure there are others in the building and that someone—a supervisor or security guard—will wait with you for your ride or walk you to your car or bus or train stop.
- Be alert in the neighborhood. Call police or tell an adult about anything you see that seems suspicious.
- Don't give in to a false sense of security just because you have a cell phone.

Driving

- Keep your car in good running condition. Make sure there's enough gas to get where you're going and back.
- Turn the ignition off and take your car keys with you, even if you just have to run inside for one minute.
Roll up the windows and lock car doors, even if you're coming right back.
- Check inside and out before getting in.
- Avoid parking in isolated areas. If you are uncomfortable, ask a security guard or store staff to watch you or escort you to your car.
- Drive to the nearest gas station, open business, or other well-lighted, crowded area to get help if you think you are being followed. Don't head home.
- Use your cellular phone, if you have one, to call the police if you are being followed or you've seen an accident. Otherwise, stay off your cellular phone while you are driving.
- Don't pick up hitchhikers.
- Don't hitchhike.

Taking Public Transportation

- Use well-lighted, busy stops. If you must get off at a little-used stop, try to arrange for a friend to meet you.
- Stay alert! Don't doze or daydream.
- Say, "leave me alone" loudly if someone hassles you. Don't be embarrassed.
- Watch who gets off your stop with you.
- If you feel uneasy, walk directly to a place where there are other people.

If Someone Tries to Rob You

- Give up your property—don't give up your life.
- Report the crime to the police. Try to describe the attacker accurately. Your actions can help prevent others from becoming victims.